Sale of seized Guns

1486. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether seized guns are being sold to Members of Parliament only;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether market prices are much higher; and

(d) if so, the reasons for low fixing of customs prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) and (b) As per the existing policy of the Govt. the prohibited bore weapons confiscated by Customs are appropriated for departmental use. Confiscated non-porhibited bore weapons are, however, allotted to departmental officers on lease terms on a selective basis of their security and personal safety while in service; these weapons are to be returned on their retirement/superannuation.

It has been a policy of the Govt. to consider individual requests of VIPs — normally Hon'ble Members of Parliament — for allotment of non-prohibited bore confiscated weapons, if any available in stock with Customs after meeting the above requirements. The weapons sold are for their personal use/safety and carry a condition of No resale. For security considerations and lack of sufficient availability, very restricted sales to VIPs only are permitted.

(c) and (d) The sale prices of the confiscated guns, fixed in accordance with the laid down guidelines, charged from Members of Parliament vary with the type, model & category i.e. pistol, revolver or rifles. Imports of fire arms are restricted and sale of fire arms — where import permitted — is also prohibited. Open market prices of imported guns are not available and hence, it is not possible to comment on the degree of difference between the sale price of Customs and actual market prices. The pricing policy is, however, under review.

Balance sheet on subsidy

1487. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the balance sheet on subsidy;

(b) whether Government have any well-crafted and precisely targeted subsidy plan which can work wonders in case there is imbalance therein; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (c) Total subsidies in the Central Government are budgeted at Rs. 23838 crore for 1999-2000. The details of the subsidies are given in the enclosed statement. (*See* below) The endeavour of the Central Government has been to rationalise the system of subsidies by making them transparent and effecting changes in prices of subsidised items wherever necessary. Balancing the requirements of containing the fiscal deficit and the need of protecting the interests of the vulnerable sections of the society, the Government has sought to curb the growth of subsidy on wheat and rice for beneficiaries belonging to 'Above the Poverty Line' category. Subsidy on sugar has also been reduced as a result of better targeting of subsidies.